

Preparing for 988 in Delaware

Summer 2022



What You Need to Know

On July 16, 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will transition to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit number (988). Options for texting and online chat will also become more available. This is a federally-required telecom change and Delaware, like every state, has been preparing for it. Along with a multidisciplinary 988 Planning Coalition, Delaware's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health has developed a plan to ensure at least 90% of the 988 contacts by Delawareans can be answered by counselors in Delaware by mid-2023.

ABOUT 988

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) will switch to an easy-to-remember, 3-digit number (988) on July 16, 2022.
- 988 will accept calls, texts and chats from anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis. People also can contact 988 if they are concerned about a loved one in crisis.
- During the first year of 988, people with a Delaware area code who reach out to 988 will be connected with ContactLifeline, Delaware's only Lifeline Center.
- As early as the end of 2022, Delaware will add a second Lifeline Center operated by DHSS's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

ABOUT CONTACTLIFELINE

- ContactLifeline, Inc. has been operating in Delaware since 1974 and has been serving as the state's only National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Center.
- ContactLifeline provides telephone counseling, crisis intervention, referral information, education, and prevention services for persons in crisis, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- ContactLifeline is funded in part by Delaware's Department of Health and Social Services using federal funds, as well as through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

For more info: de.gov/988

What you can do to prepare



FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Call 988 or continue to call 1-800-273-8255 to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline when you or your loved ones experience suicidal crises.
- Continue to use existing crisis hotline services as additional resources, especially if an in-person response is needed.
 - Adult Crisis Hotline:
 - 1-800-652-2929 (Northern DE)
 - 1-800-345-6785 (Southern DE)
 - Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-969-HELP (4357)
- If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.



FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

- Begin conversations with staff in your agency on the existing referral sources and how they can expand to better serve individuals experiencing crisis.
- Continue to provide clients and other individuals:
 - Adult Crisis Hotline:
 - 1-800-652-2929 (Northern DE)
 - 1-800-345-6785 (Southern DE)
 - Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-969-HELP (4357)
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)
- Until additional staff and resources are in place in 2023, do not identify 988 as an agency-specific crisis service.



FOR STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

- Watch for updates as the 988 transition continues in 2023, and services and staffing expand.
- Engage local partners such as behavioral health providers, law enforcement agencies, medical providers and schools to discuss how your community will use 988.



FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, PARAMEDICS AND 911 CENTERS

- The National Emergency Number Association 911-988 Interoperability Standards Workgroup will release recommendations on 911 and 988 interactions this summer.
- Delaware has a statewide 911-988 Coordinating Workgroup that will continue to meet through the transition and implementation of 988.

